Castle Inn Was Colonial Stopover

Records show that Castle Inn was located at the present 444 North Main Street. Many visitors stayed here on their way from Williamsburg to Edenton, North Carolina, during the 18th Century.

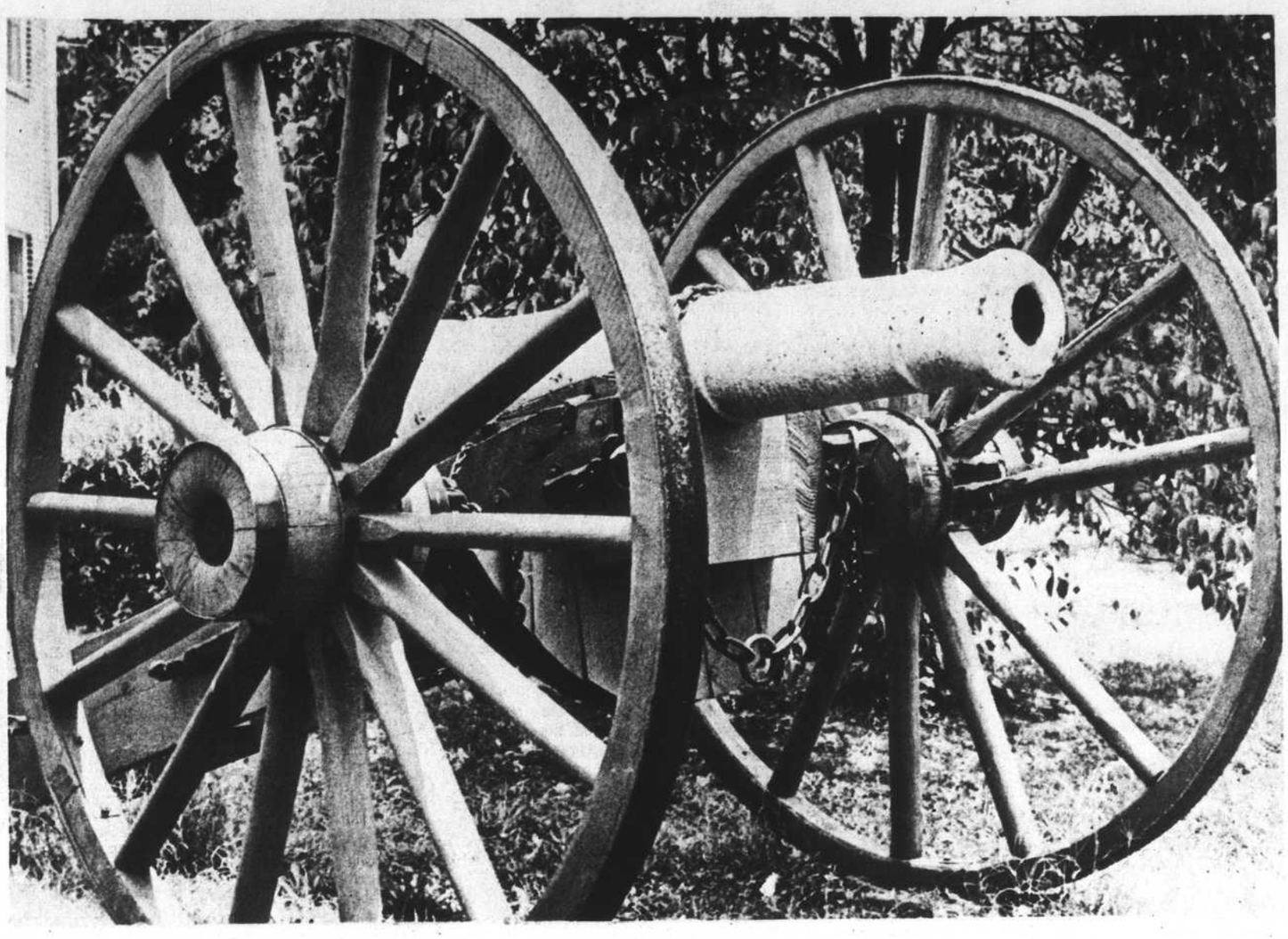
In the first quarter of the 19th Century, Putnam Dickinson ran this inn and, at his death, his wife took over the management of the inn. It has been said that Mrs. Catherine Cross Dickinson called her guests to dinner by blowing a trumpet.

The Marquis de Lafayette, on February 25, 1825, stayed at Castle Inn on his tour of America. On the evening of Lafayette's arrival in Suffolk, a great banquet was held on the second floor of the Nansemond County Court House, followed by an extended round of toasts and introductions lasting until Lafayette and his suite retired at 11 p.m. to Castle Inn. Captain Mills Riddick presided over the banquet. On the 26th of February, Lafayette breakfasted at Castle Inn with the Suffolk Board of Trustees and Arrangement of Committee. When he left Suffolk, four or five carriages, filled with Suffolk citizens, escorted him to Somerton, Virginia. Doctors Murdaugh and Shepherd, and Captan Mills Riddick accompanied him to Murfresboro, North Carolina, and attended the celebration there.

In 1837, this inn and the Rising Run Tavern owned by Thomas P. Smith (on the adjacent lot South of Castle Inn) were destroyed in the "Great Fire" on Main Street. After the fire, these inns were not rebuilt, and the lots were later sold. There have been many owners of this property over th years and the property is now owned by the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association.

Did This Cannon Really Defend The City?

The cannon pictured above the drawing of how it may have appeared in colonial times was supposedly given by a Capt. Bright of the brig Mars to the Nansemond militia for the defense of Suffolk. The cannon, which now belongs to the family of the late Dr. Reginald Holland, was discovered decades later by the doctor sticking up in the ground of a local blacksmith's shop. At that time the fragile old piece was being used as a foundation for beating out the smithy's hot metals.



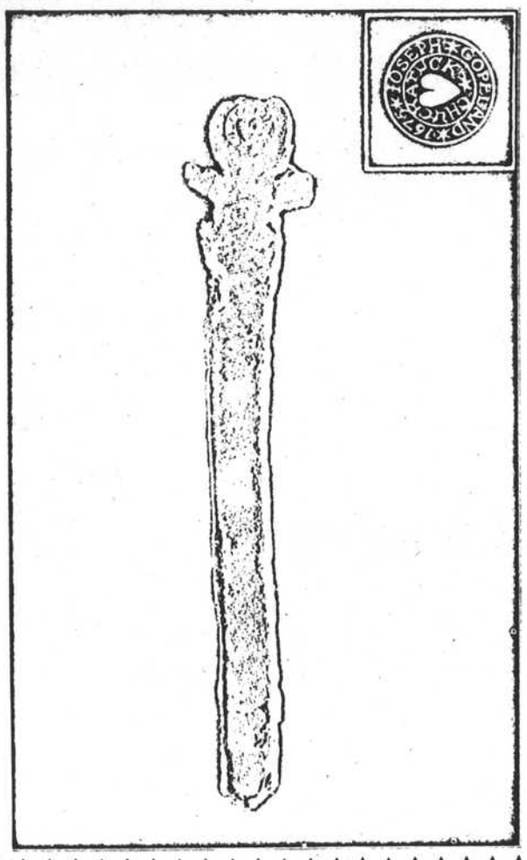
Existing Revolutionary War Cannon Used In Defense of Suffolk 1779

Famous Quakers Visited Colonial Nansemond

June 10, 1789. Job Scott, a minister of the Friends church visited Nansemond County and preached at Bennett Creek and in the County Court House in Suffolk. Rev. Geo. Fox and his companies visited this section in the year 1672, and preached at many places around Chuckatuck, and then visited into Somerton community where he preached at a private home, John Porter's, the site of this old home is still pointed out. In a very short time he addressed a letter to the most prominent of his followers giving them an outline as to how to organize a society, and it was not long before there were several Friends or Quaker meeting houses in the county, one at Chuckatuck, one on Bennett Creek, one where Holy Neck church now stands, and one where the present Somerton Friends Church stands. In addition to the above we are told that there were several other smaller ones, as if in the early days they were afraid to gather in large numbers, and so they built small log meeting houses, one standing on the south side of the State road between Suffolk and Holland. Their old records are among the most interesting documents possessed by this section. The record of the Chuckatuck Meeting, and the record of the Somerton Friends Meeting give much of the lost history of the sections in which they are located. Rev. Job Scott was making a preaching tour, for the purpose of encouraging the brethren. In 1728, Col. Wm. Byrd on his visit to the county remarked that they passed no less than two Quaker meeting houses, that sect prevailing very much in the lower Nansemond, because the people did not have any one to point them to a decenter way to heaven."

May Be Oldest Pewter Spoon

This fragment of the Copeland or Chuckatuck spoon, which was excavated at Jamestown, may well be the oldest pewter piece made in America. The spoon is dated 1675 and is on display at the Jamestown Foundation. The handle is a variant of the Trifid termination, fashionable in the latter half of the 17th century. Its total length is 5½ inches. Also shown is a replica of the spoon which is sold in gift shops carrying pewter items.



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